It needs a well-drained location that has provisions for adequate watering when the weather gets dry. Should you want to provide the most perfect soil condition, correct the area to be used so that it will have a pH of 5.5 to 6.5 before planting sepecially prized Hibiscus.

Good plants will be indicated not so much by height, as whether or not they are sturdy, well-cared for specimens such as you will find at the better nurseries. A plant on which the price is cheap often will turn out to be a cheap plant.

To mulch Hibiscus plants heavily with peat moss or some other material helps keep down weeds and retains soil moisture. But beware of letting mulch touch the plant trunk, as this encourages crown-rot fungus disease.

South Florida - By Clarence A. Bass

Hibiscus plants grow and bloom best in soil that is a little acid. As I grow my plants on coral rock land in Dade County this was one of the problems that I had to learn to deal with. I fertilize my plants every seven to eight weeks eith alternate formulas. One time I use 6% ammonia, 6% Phosphoric acid and 6% potash. The next time I use 4-8-8 GARDENIA SPECIAL.

I always use the top grade of fertilizer for in the long run I think it is the best value. The Gardenia Special formula is very highly acid and so corrects the highly alkaline condition of our coral soil. By following this fertilizing schedule I have been very successful in producing good quality plants and blooms.

Snow scale, Hemispherical scale, California Black scane and Aphids are the insects that commonly attack Hibiscus plants. These can be controlled by spraying with a good insecticide according to the manufacturers directions.

Very few diseases attack Hibiscus plants. Deficiency troubles are common in all parts of Florida. The cause is usually over-fertilizing, too much water or unfavorable soil conditions. Manganese and iron are the elements most often deficient in South Florida soil. Plants should be pruned back and sprayed with a nutritional spray that is high in manganese.

LETTERS! WE GET LETTERS!

Brownsville Texas
July 22, 1959

Mr. L. K. Thompson
American Hibiscus Society

Dear Mr. Thompson,

Some time ago Mrs. Calais asked me to write the Seed Pod my experiences in raising seedling Hibiscus in Texas. Flr your information Brownsville is at the tip of Texas; and on a line as far south as Miami. Our climate is tropical.

About seven years ago I received a Horticultural section of a Florida paper on hybridizing Hibiscus. and this was my beginning. I must have tried a couple hundred before I got a seed pod; this was a Pink Beauty on a Golden Dawn. Before I found it it had amtured and most of the seeds had popped out. I then tried a combination that worked, getting over 100 seed the first year; from this about 50% grew, or germinated, results were, some very promising plants. But I had some bad luck that summer as our river water became low and water was salty, killing all but 15 plants. These grew to be fine sturdy Hibiscus, and some beautiful specimens. One especially for the book. This I named after my wife, "Gladys Carroll". It is everything one could wish for in a Hibiscus, very strong, both flower and bush very free bloomer, curly overlapping Chinese Red, center rather purpleish, yellow back, a first prize winner in every show.

The following year we had over 200 seed and had a fairly good germination, coming out with 135 plants. Out of this crop there were some good ones worth saving. As far as I know I am the only one in the Rio Grande Valley that has done any hypridizing to any extent.